[7th February 1924

*Grievances of ryots in the villages situated within a mile of forest reserves.*

207 Q.—Mr. Yahya Ali Sahib : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether a committee has been appointed for the Nellore district to inquire into the grievances of the ryots in respect of reserves lying within a mile of the village-site or the cultivated area of a village, as recommended generally for all districts in the Resolution of the Legislative Council, dated 6th February 1923 ; and

(*b*) if not, why not ?

*A.*—(*a*) No.

(*b*) The hon. Member is referred to G.O. No. 742, Development, dated 23rd May 1923, which has been placed on the Editors' Table.

*Extensive thefts of valuable timber trees in the Attapadi and Silent valleys.*

11-30 a.m. 208 Q.—Mr. S. Satyamurti : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased—

(i) to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that extensive thefts have taken place in respect of valuable timber trees in the reserve forests of the Attapadi and Silent valleys, Walluvanad taluk, Malabar district ;

(*b*) whether it is a fact that the attention of the District Forest Officer, Palghat, was drawn to the aforesaid thefts ;

(*c*) whether the Conservator of Forests, VI Circle, has taken any steps to prevent such thefts in the future and to bring to book the offenders ;

(*d*) whether it is the duty of the Forest Department to investigate and prosecute the culprits ;

(*e*) whether the rules published by the Government in the Forest Manual provide that such complicated and doubtful cases and cases which involve large sums of money should be prosecuted, and why these rules have not been followed in this case ;

(*f*) whether the Forest Department is working at a loss to the Government ; and

(ii) to place on the table all the papers connected with the above case ?

*A.*—(i) (*a*) There have been illicit fellings in the reserved forests referred to.

(*b*) to (*d*) Yes.

(*e*) Yes : the evidence forthcoming in this case was not such as to justify a prosecution.

(*f*) No.

(ii) The papers cannot be placed on the table.

Mr. K. Prabhakaran Tampan :—" Will the Government be pleased to appoint a special Forest Officer or a C.I.D. Officer to collect evidence so that we may know the exact nature and extent of the thefts and conduct prosecutions ? "

The hon. Sir Arthur Knapp :—" No, Sir, I don't think any useful purpose will be served by reopening the matter. I have every confidence in the reports of Conservator of Forests and his department."